

NEVADA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

The Nevada County Transportation Commission (NCTC) is the Regional Transportation Planning Agency for Nevada County. NCTC coordinates state and federal transportation programs for Nevada County, the City of Grass Valley, Nevada City, and the Town of Truckee.

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Nevada County Transportation Commission Newsletter

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The Nevada County Transportation Commission Newsletter is published bimonthly. If you would like to be added to the mailing list, please write or call the Nevada County Transportation Commission office.

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NEVADA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION NEWSLETTER

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WORKING WITH OUR TRANSPORTATION PLANNING NEIGHBOR

The Nevada County Transportation Commission (NCTC) and its counterpart, Placer County Transportation Planning Agency (PCTPA), have joined forces through a Joint Subcommittee that meets, as needed, to discuss transportation planning issues that overlap the two counties. Members of this subcommittee from Placer County are: Sherie Blackmun, Colfax Councilmember; Kathy Sands, Auburn Councilmember; Harriet White, County Board of Supervisors; and alternate Roger Insdahl, citizen representative. Placer support staff are: Celia McAdam, PCTPA Executive Director; Linda Aeschliman, PCTPA Planner; and Rick Dondro, Deputy Director of Placer County Public Works. The Nevada County members are: Peter Van Zant, NCTC Chairman; Chet Krage and Ann Guerra, NCTC Commissioners. Nevada County support staff for the subcommittee are: Dan Landon, NCTC Executive Director; and John Rumsey, Nevada County Department of Transportation and Sanitation.

Topics of discussion have included: Alternatives to the SR 49 corridor for travel to and from I-80; improvements on SR 49 from I-80 up to Grass Valley; partnering in alternative transportation efforts such as Amtrak's Capitol Corridor, a Colfax to Sacramento commuter bus, an improved bus system from Grass Valley to Auburn, a feasibility study for train service from Sacramento to Reno; an Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Strategic Deployment Plan (which was adopted in May's NCTC meeting); and, reconstruction and widening of the Union Pacific Railroad undercrossing on SR 89 in Truckee, known as the "mousehole".

NCTC and PCTPA also monitor projects with benefits and/or impacts that cross the county lines, such as the Martis Valley Community Plan. Both transportation planning agencies are members of the TNT/TMA (Truckee-North Tahoe/Transportation Management Association) where interregional projects such as the Winter Shuttle Service have been developed and implemented.

We are featuring some of these joint planning projects to give you a broader picture of how the Nevada County and Placer County transportation planning agencies are putting forth great efforts to improve the interregional transportation system.



BELL ROAD WIDENING IN AUBURN – Utilizing funds from a federal planning grant, NCTC, PCTPA, and Caltrans conducted a joint planning effort to analyze alternatives for travel on SR 49 from Nevada County to the I-80 corridor. A recommendation from this study targeted the widening of Bell Road from I-80 to the Wise Canal near the SR 49 junction as a key short-term provision to relieve some local traffic congestion and improve circulation for commuters traveling through North Auburn. The widening project now under construction will make Bell Road a four lane limited access expressway. The 2.5 mile road widening includes maintaining the existing bike lanes within the shoulders. The project commenced on April 29th with Teichert Construction taking a very aggressive approach to completing most of the construction work this summer, with final paving and striping to be done in the summer of 2003. The Bell Road widening project is completely funded by the Placer County Traffic Mitigation Fee Program.

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Upcoming NCTC Meeting

The next meeting of the Nevada County Transportation Commission (NCTC) will be held **Wednesday, June 19, 2002 at 8:30 a.m., in the Grass Valley City Council Chambers, 125 East Main Street, Grass Valley, CA.**



"Nevada Station" in Auburn

IMPROVEMENTS PLANNED FOR AUBURN STATION

Have you ever admired the "Nevada Station" on Nevada St. in Auburn located near the train depot? Much to the surprise of many people, Nevada Station is *not* the train station but an office building. Pictured below is the Auburn "train station" which consists of a bus-type shelter and a porta-potty. "Lots of room for improvement," you say?

Plans for upgrading the Auburn train station have been submitted to the City of Auburn for final review.



Auburn "Train Station"

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SR 49 CORRIDOR STUDY ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS— After completion of the SR 49 Alternatives Analysis and pursuant to direction from the Joint Subcommittee, resolutions were adopted by PCTPA and NCTC to pursue solutions to enhance circulation from the Nevada City/Grass Valley area to Interstate 80. In a letter of response to NCTC, Caltrans District 3 Director Jody Lonergan committed continued cooperation and support from Caltrans to all the jurisdictions along the Highway 49 corridor in the planning and implementing of future improvements. In addition to the widening of Bell Road, NCTC, PCTPA, and Caltrans are supporting safety and operational improvements on the SR 49 segment between I-80 and Dry Creek Road (which includes widening most of this segment to six lanes); four-laning of SR 49 between Dry Creek and Wolf/Combie Roads and eventually up to Grass Valley; reconstruction of the Bell Road/I-80 interchange; construction of a connector road between Bell Road and the Bowman Road/I-80 interchange; and improvements to local roads adjacent to SR 49 in North Auburn.

The SR 49 safety and operational improvement project from the I-80 interchange to Dry Creek is now scheduled to begin construction in FY 2004/05. Along with these safety and operational improvements to SR 49, Placer County is going to construct improvements to adjacent local roads to allow local residents to make trips within North Auburn without accessing SR 49. Professional Drive and Willow Creek Road will both be extended to provide additional access to the county offices. Quartz Drive will be extended from SR 49 to Locksley Lane, and Edgewood Road in the City of Auburn will be extended to Alta Mesa Drive. All of these improvements are designed to compliment the operations and safety project Caltrans is doing to help relieve congestion in the North Auburn area.

Other methods supported by NCTC and PCTPA to enhance transportation needs include promoting commute alternatives on SR 49 by publicizing information regarding van pools, carpools, and transit information. Another commute alternative, funded by Placer County, is a commuter bus program from Colfax to Sacramento that will start this fall. The commuter bus project will be a two year demonstration project using Placer County Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality funds. There will be two routes each morning and afternoon. Buses will leave Colfax and stop at park-and-ride lots along the I-80 corridor into Sacramento. Schedules have not been finalized and cost for riders will be based on the length of the trip, but the actual cost has not been determined yet. Placer County plans to put this project out for bid from a private contractor this fall. They are estimating the total cost for the service will be approximately \$200,000 per year including leasing of the vehicles. The planned departure point for the route in Colfax is the state park-and-ride lot near Dingus McGees restaurant. NCTC staff will look into marketing this service in Nevada County and into the possibility of coordinating Gold Country Stage routes, which connect at Colfax and Auburn, with the Placer County commuter bus service.

GOLD COUNTRY STAGE ROUTE 5— Thanks to a funding partnership between Nevada County and Placer County, Gold Country Stage Route 5 provides an express commuter inter-city service between Nevada City, Grass Valley, and Auburn via SR 49. Route 5 makes five daily round trips along the SR 49 corridor. Service is operated Monday through Saturday, with southbound service originating at the National Hotel transfer point in Nevada City, and northbound service originating at the Joe Elders Transfer Center on Lincoln Way in Auburn. The limited stops along this express route include downtown Nevada City, downtown Grass Valley, Alta Sierra, Lake of the Pines, Bel-Air Shopping Center, and downtown Auburn. Schedules are coordinated between Route 5 and other transit systems and transfers are free to and from Auburn Transit and Placer County Transit routes which provide service in the Auburn area and to Rocklin, Roseville, and the Sacramento RT light rail system. In Fiscal Year 2000-2001 Gold Country Stage Route 5 provided 24,908 passenger trips.



SR 49 southbound between Pekolee and Lime Kiln

SR 49 WIDENING PROJECT FROM WOLF/COMBIE ROADS INTO GRASS VALLEY— At our May NCTC meeting, Karl Dreher of Caltrans reported they are currently working on the environmental document for the four lane widening project. Caltrans expects to complete the project report and the environmental document by July 2004. At the April California Transportation Commission (CTC) meeting, funds were approved for design and right-of-way expenses for this project. Caltrans is working closely with the NCTC, Nevada County, and the City of Grass Valley to coordinate local land use plans with plans for widening the SR 49 corridor.

MARTIS VALLEY COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE— In the Fall of 1998, the Placer County Board of Supervisors authorized and directed the Planning Department to initiate an update of the 1975 Martis Valley General Plan. The Placer County Board of Supervisors selected a citizen committee that represented various property owners, service providers, and citizen groups from Northstar and subdivisions in the northern portion of the plan area. This committee started working with the Placer County Planning Department staff in 1999 and was asked to assist in the preparation of the Martis Valley Community Plan to address new environmental and socioeconomic conditions of the Martis Valley area, as well as update the original Martis Valley General Plan goals and policies.

The Martis Valley is an area of land measuring approximately 70 square miles. The geographic location is within Placer and Nevada Counties, as well as within the Town of Truckee's incorporated limits. Although this community plan addresses the Placer County portion of the valley, it is being prepared in a way that recognizes other jurisdictions are affected by what occurs within the valley. NCTC is monitoring development of the Martis Valley Community Plan to insure that future traffic from the Martis Valley will not exceed the capacity of the SR 267 Truckee Bypass currently under construction and scheduled to be open in 2002.

PHOTOS OF MARTIS VALLEY AND SR 267 TRUCKEE BYPASS



Amtrak, Capitol Corridor, the Public Utilities Commission, and Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) will then give their final input. The city hopes to go out to bid by late June and begin construction this summer. Planned improvements include a 40 space park-and-ride lot, a 200 foot long boarding platform with shelters, restroom, sidewalk improvements, and a transit transfer center. The original boarding platform was torn out when UPRR built the layover track to house the train overnight, and installed the power switch that automatically moves the train between the layover track and the main track. Rail stations in Colfax, Rocklin, and Roseville are also undergoing renovations and improvements to parking, shelters, and passenger amenities.



Current boarding location for Auburn train station

CAPITOL CORRIDOR UPDATE— PCTPA and NCTC are committed to supporting the ongoing development of the Capitol Corridor rail service as an alternative means of transportation. PCTPA is a member of the Capitol Corridors Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA), a consortium of transportation agencies representing eight counties that manage the Capitol Corridor rail service between San Jose and Auburn. Amtrak operates this service. Placer County service includes a connector bus service from Reno, Colfax, and Grass Valley/Nevada City to the Auburn rail station. Auburn, Rocklin, and Roseville have the fastest growing ridership on the Capitol Corridor, and that is with only one round-trip train a day. The Capitol Corridor, as a whole, has increased ridership 40% between FY 1999/00 and 2000/01.

Currently the Capitol Corridor train leaves the Auburn station at 6:30 a.m. for its westbound trip. It travels through Sacramento, Davis, San Francisco (Emeryville), Oakland; the trip to San Jose continues by bus. The east-bound train arrives back in Auburn at approximately 6:35 p.m. Passengers may use connector buses to Sacramento if their needs do not coincide with these times.



Capitol Corridor Amtrak train coming into Auburn station

The Capitol Corridor rail line just celebrated 10 years of service and is recognized as the fastest growing passenger rail corridor in the nation. With increased congestion along the I-80 corridor and the Bay Area freeways, commuters have turned to a more relaxing and efficient way to get to and from work. While others sit in a gridlock, commuters can work on their laptop computers (modems are available), have breakfast, wind down at the end of a long day with a beverage, or just enjoy a cat nap. Transit transfer passes are now available to connecting transit buses or light rail lines. Passengers riding the train from Placer County, known as the "CC Riders", actually hired a band for a St. Patrick's Day party on the train and were serenaded from Sacramento to Auburn. It makes you wonder what you are missing by not riding the train!

Draft business plans for the Capitol Corridor for 2002/03 through 2003/04 include such desired improvements as an increase in the total number of round trip trains between Oakland and Sacramento from nine to twelve a day. Expansion from one to four trains to Roseville, and two trains to Auburn by 2003/04 is also in the plan. Special event trains are also included in the draft plans, such as winter weekend trains up to Truckee and/or Reno by 2003/04. In partnership with the CCJPA, PCTPA and NCTC are working to fund a strategic plan for extending the Capitol Corridor service to the Reno area. NCTC and PCTPA staff will discuss this project with the TNT/TMA, Truckee Chamber, and other potential partners in the Tahoe/Truckee area.

WINTER SHUTTLE SERVICE PROVIDES A WAY OF "GETTING TO WORK WITHOUT A CAR"



Truckee Trolley

Working through the TNT/TMA (Truckee-North Tahoe/Transportation Management Association), The Town of Truckee, Nevada County, Placer County, and the North Lake Tahoe Resort Association funded the operation of a winter shuttle service. This winter service was originally envisioned as a means of getting ski area employees to their jobs without vehicles to provide more parking spaces for guests. However, guest ridership has increased significantly over the past three years. The service operates between November and April, during the peak ski season, and includes three routes: Route A from Sugar Bowl to the Truckee Depot, Route B from the Truckee Depot to Northstar Ski Resort, and Route C from Northstar Ski Resort to Kings Beach with connections to the Tahoe Area Rapid Transit (TART). In 1998/99 the three routes carried a total of 28,742 passengers. During 1999/2000 ridership increased to 39,177. In 2000/01 ridership was 43,633, and in 2001/02 ridership had increased to 45,405. In 2001/02 employees were 62.5% of the ridership and guests were 26.8% of the ridership.

In an effort to enhance access to jobs in the Lake Tahoe region, PCTPA has been awarded a Caltrans grant and has contracted with TNT/TMA to prepare a public transit service implementation plan for job access in the Truckee/North Lake Tahoe area. This project will produce an implementation plan for a two-way public transit service between Truckee/North Lake Tahoe and Reno, Nevada. The plan will analyze current residential transit needs and employee needs; assess commuter, visitor, and other transit needs; organize a regional public/private stakeholder working group; and provide an implementation schedule for recommended transit services. As a stakeholder in this interregional project, NCTC is providing a portion of the matching funds for the Caltrans grant.